

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BELGRA 02805 221607 Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W
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P 221540 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6533

S E C R E T BELGRADE 2805

EXDIS

E. O. 11652: EXEMPT CATEGORY 2
TAGS: YO PINS PINT PFOR
SUBJ: OUSTER OF GENERAL MISKOVIC

REF BELGRADE 2788

1. SUMMARY. ANOTHER VERSION OF MISKOVIC OUSTER ATTRIBUTES HIS FALL FROM GRACE TO FAILURE TO FULLY INFORM TITO ON PLOT WITHIN MILITARY TO TAKE POWER. END SUMMARY.

2. AN ALLEGEDLY WELL- CONNECTED BUT TOTALLY UNTESTED SOURCE PROVIDES FOLLOWING VERSION OF MISKOVIC DOWNFALL (REPORTED CONCURRENTLY IN OTHER CHANNELS). MISKOVIC OBTAINED KNOWLEDGE OF A PLAN WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT, INVOLVING SEVERAL GENERAL OFFICERS, TO TAKE POWER. HE REPORTED THIS TO TITO, BUT HELD BACK SOME INFORMATION. WHEN TITO LEARNED THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN FULLY INFORMED, HE AXED MISKOVIC. TIME- FRAME OF ALLEGED PLANNING IS NOT CLEAR, BUT SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AS EARLY AS LAST FALL. SOURCE ALLEGES OTHER GENERALS ALSO WILL LOSE THEIR POSITIONS.

3. EMBASSY CONSIDERS ABOVE TOTALLY WITHIN THE CATEGORY OF AN UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMOR. IT MIGHT HAVE SOME RING OF BELIEVABILITY IF THE SUPPOSED TAKE- OVER PLOT INVOLVED MILITARY CONTINGENCY PLANNING FOR THE IMMEDIATE POST- TITO PERIOD IN THE EVENT OF POLITICAL DESTABILIZATION AND THE INABILITY OF A SUCCESSOR CIVILIAN ADMINISTRATION TO MAINTAIN ORDER AND NATIONAL COHESION. THE IDEA OF A MILITARY MOVE WHILE TITO IS IN POWER IS HARDLY CREDIBLE. WHILE THE MILITARY TRADITIONALLY STAYS OUT OF ACTIVE

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POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN YUGOSLAVIA, IT CERTAINLY WAS WAITING IN THE WINGS IN CASE OF NEED AT THE TIME OF DECEMBER 1971 CROATIAN CRISIS, AND WAS INVOKED BY TITO HIMSELF AS THE ULTIMATE PROTECTOR OF " SOCIALISM" (BELGRADE 5573, 5657 DECEMBER 1971). THUS, IT WOULD NOT BE SURPRISING IF A GROUP WITHIN THE MILITARY ESTABLISHMENT WERE TO BEE WORKING ON CONTINGENCY PLANNING.

4. THIS INFORMATION HOWEVER IS WITHOUT COROBORATION, AND SHOULD BE TREATED ACCORDINGLY. IN ADDITION, IT SHOULD BE CLOSELY HELD BECAUSE OF SOURCE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS.

JOHNSON

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** EXDIS

*** Current Classification *** SECRET

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